

# Disability Services:

## The Power and Complexity of Accommodations

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# Agenda & Understandings

## 01. The Role of Disability Services

Purpose & Scope

## 02. Accommodations

Creating Equal Access

## 03. The Interactive Process

Never Say Never! & "It depends"

## 04. Fundamental Alterations

Protect Your Course Objectives



# Q&A Topics:

- Absences
- Extensions / Flexible Deadlines
- Group Work
- Presentations
- Discussion Boards
- ADHD
- Class Discussions
- Class Participation
- Zoom Meetings
- ESA's and Service Animals
- Extended Exam Time

What Else?  
Scenarios?

# DS: Our Core Purpose

## **As Stated in 504:**

No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States, as defined in section 705 (20) of this title, shall, **solely by reason of his or her disability**, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be **subjected to discrimination** under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

# Disability Services:

- Equal Access & Non-Discrimination
- Students with disabilities use accommodations to meet the same standards as their peers.



# What Does This Mean for Us?

**Students with disabilities experience nondiscrimination and equitable access when they are able to:**

- Fully engage and participate in the same activities, campus services, benefits and experiences offered to a person without a disability;
- Utilize the same information shared with everyone;
- Have the same opportunity to achieve.

# Drilling Down Further...

- Disabled students have equal access and opportunity to:
  - **Obtain the same information given to other students** (lecture, text and document content, videos, web content, etc.)
  - **Demonstrate knowledge in the same manner as other students** (tests, papers, presentations, projects, through attendance, participation, etc.)

# The Role of DS



Within the **federal (ADA/504) guidelines** and Board of Regents Policy, **determine and implement appropriate academic and programmatic accommodations for students in the UAS system who have documented disabilities.** Consult with **faculty, advisors, and administrators to implement appropriate accommodation plans for students with disabilities.** Provide staff liaison services for students when appropriate and/or necessary.



# How DS is Guided



- ADA and 504
- Case Law/Case Resolutions
- UA Board of Regents Policy
- UA General Counsel
- Professional Organization AHEAD (Association on Higher Education and Disability)
- Partnership with UA and UAF Disability Services Offices
- Supervised by Dean of Students
- Office of Equity and Compliance (Grievance)

# Current Trend in DS

Students requests are more complex, less acute — students are more aware of their rights and willing to ask for more — increase in complaints.



# How Can Faculty Support Students with Accommodations

- Start the conversation
- Clear Expectations and Course Objectives in Syllabus
- Include DS information in your Syllabus
- Be specific about program eligibility requirements

# How Can Faculty Support Students with Accommodations

- Provide notice to students of the essential requirements/course objectives for the course
- Multiple Modes of Communication
- Apply UDL Guidelines
- **Communicate with DS when issues arise**
- Encourage adjuncts to contact DS for training

# Syllabus Statement:

- *If you experience a disability and would like information about accommodations, please contact Disability Services, located at the Student Resource Center in the Mourant building, by phone 907-796-6000 or email [uas.disabilityservices@alaska.edu](mailto:uas.disabilityservices@alaska.edu).*

## Faculty Responsibilities

- Provide accommodations only for students who are currently registered with DS.
- Consult with the student and DS.
- Communicate testing procedures with the student and DS when necessary.
- Incorporate Universal Design to make all course materials accessible (provide captions, transcripts, accessible documents, etc.). Contact DS or CELT!



## Faculty Responsibilities

- Practice FERPA and protect all students' disability-related information as confidential medical information (HIPAA).
- Provide the Learning Center with quizzes, tests, exams, and/or passwords no less than 2 hours prior to scheduled testing administration.
- Contact DS immediately with any concerns.



## Faculty Rights

- Obtain information about the student's specific accommodations
- Consult with DS staff regarding reasonable alternative accommodations
- Expect all students to observe UAS academic standards and code of conduct
- **Hold the same standards for students registered with DS as their peers**
- Faculty members do not have the right to ask students if they have a disability. If a student should choose to disclose their disability, this information should be treated confidentially





# Advising a Student with Disabilities

## Strategies for an Effective Meeting

- Before the discussion begins, allow some quiet time to ensure that the student has had time to settle in to the space.
- Review the goals of the meeting.
- When appropriate/possible, use visuals to reinforce content/process (ex: check lists)
- Allow time for the student to ask questions.
- Discuss action plan/next steps. Encourage the student to take notes and/or follow-up via email with a written summary

# Advising a Student with Disabilities

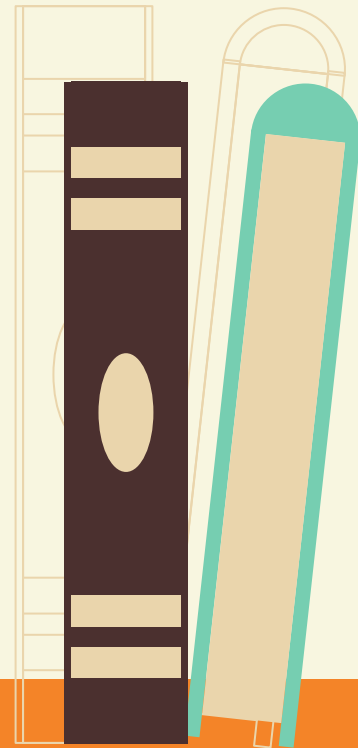
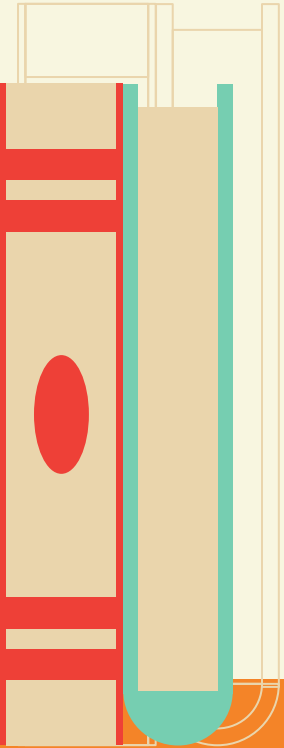
## **Scheduling/ Course Choice Considerations:**

- Number of courses/academic workload
- Variety of courses in regard to content/focus
- Course formats
- Field Trips
- Reading Load / Course Variety
- Length of instructional time- 50 minute,75 minute, 3 hour
- Timing and location of courses throughout the day
- Placement of courses throughout the week
- Travelling for Medical
- Pre-Meeting with Professors (especially autistic students)

# How to Refer a Student

- Gather information about a few resources on campus that you think this student might benefit from.
- You might say, "I want to share some information on campus services that you might find helpful."
  - Counseling
  - DS
  - Testing/ Learning Center

# What Are Accommodations?



# Accommodations

- Adjustments to a learning environment or curriculum that allows a student with a documented disability to have equal access to a program or course.
- Accommodations remove barriers.



# Something to Think About...

- Assigning accommodations should be about letting students **into** the same opportunities everyone else has.
- Accommodations should not let students with disabilities **out of** responsibilities or expectations we hold for others.

# Examples:

- What is the academic/institutional barrier?
- How might a student be impacted relative to the experience of others?
- Is equal access and opportunity limited in any way?

## Common Accommodations:

- Peer Note-Takers
- Extended Testing Time
- Reduced Distraction Testing Environment
- Audio Recording Lectures
- Receiving Lecture Slides
- E-text
- Captioning
- Housing / Private Bedroom





# Other Accommodations

- Flexibility with Deadlines
- Flexibility with Attendance
- Alternative to Oral Presentations
- Emotional Support Animal
- Scribe
- Reader
- Exempt from Meal Plan



# Fundamental Alterations



# “Fundamental Alterations”

A fundamental alteration is a change that significantly alters the essential nature of a service, program, or activity. A fundamental alteration could be lowering an academic standard, removing a required skill, or waiving a requirement for qualifying for a license.

# “Fundamental Alterations”

You protect yourself by being able to justify why something is a fundamental alteration of your course.



# A Fundamental Alteration Might...

- Lower the grading standard.
- Remove a required learning objective.
- Remove an aspect that is related to ensuring well being or safety.
- Remove requirements connected to an accreditation, license, or certification.




# Fundamental Alteration Committee Protocol

– Jamie Axelrod, Northern Arizona University ADA Coordinator

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1. Is this item/skill/objective clearly documented in the Course Content Guide?
2. Do instructors consistently/uniformly require this item/skill/objective?
3. Does the requested accommodation invalidate the objective of the course or program requirement?

***If the answer to #1-3 is yes, then ...***

4. Are there alternate ways to demonstrate mastery?
  5. Have we diligently and creatively searched for alternatives?
  6. Have we included all necessary people in this endeavor?
  7. Have we identified whether other colleges have identified alternatives that achieve the objectives without fundamentally altering requirements?
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# Examples



# Scenario 1

## Fire and Emergency Services Ladder Training

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A paraplegic student registers for courses in the Fire and Emergency Services program and seeks accommodations because he is physically unable to climb a ladder.

Would this be a fundamental alteration?





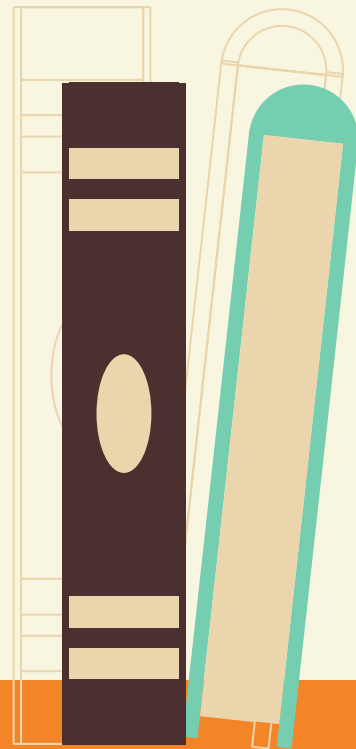
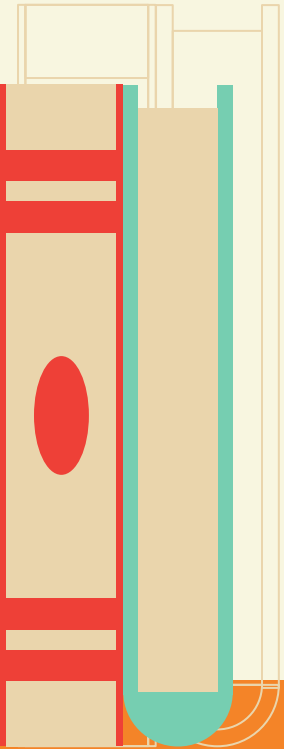
## Scenario 2: Small Engine Repair

A student taking a class in small engine repair who has limited use of his/her/their hands asks to take a written test instead of actually repairing an engine.

Is this a fundamental alteration?



# Deadline Flexibility



# Contact DS:

- **Contact us within 3 days:**
  - Does your course include group work?
  - Does your course include participation points for discussion?
  - Is this a lab course? A studio art course?
  - Is attendance and participation mandatory?
  - Would extensions on assignments affect the rest of the students?
  - Further concerns...

# Considerations

- Is there enough time provided in the “original” timeframe for completion of the assignment for this student to finish the assignment?
- When does offering longer time frame to complete work as an accommodation reduce expectations for disabled students using this accommodation compared to all other students?

# Assignment Extensions

Extensions should not impact the student's ability to be successful in your course. In general, our office recommends that "extra time" constitute 28-73 hours. It is the student's responsibility to request an amount of time that the instructor then deems reasonable. In some instances a student may consult with DS to discuss how long of an extension should be requested.

Extensions might be, but are not limited to:

- An additional hour or to the end of the day 11:59pm.
- Turning in the assignment at the start of the next class.
- An additional day or two.
- An additional week.
- \* An open extension with a final due date of the last day of classes.

# How Long to Extend?

## How many extra days do I give?

- Average is 1-3 days
- It is the student's responsibility to request an amount of time that the instructor then deems reasonable. A student may consult with DS to discuss how long of an extension should be requested. We want to mitigate power dynamics between student and faculty.

# Questions for the Instructors

Course Analysis	Yes	No	Analyze Results
<b>If the assignment is not completed by the deadline, will the student be unprepared to fully participate in a class meeting?</b>			If you answered "yes" to most or all these questions, a deadline extension would <u>not</u> be a reasonable accommodation.
<b>If the assignment is not completed by the deadline, will there be a direct impact on the learning experience for the student and/or classmates (e.g., team projects, participation)?</b>			If you answered "no" to most or all the questions, a deadline extension <u>should be</u> allowed.
<b>Does meeting assignment deadlines constitute a learning objective of the course (e.g., writing a business memo, preparing a brief, scaffolded lesson)?</b>			In this case, complete the Attendance Flexibility and Deadline Extension Accommodation Agreement Form with your analysis results.
<b>Would an additional day or two extension alter the purpose and ability to grade the assignment using the same criteria applied to the class?</b>			The Accessibility Specialist working with the student who has requested this accommodation will be in touch with you.

# What if flexibility is “abused?”

We ensure access not success- DS  
students can still experience natural  
consequences of falling behind!





## Fundamental Alteration? Questions to Ask:

- What does the course description and syllabus say regarding assignment deadlines?
- By what method is the final grade calculated?
- Will the assignment be discussed in class at a particular time?
- Does the fundamental nature of the course rely upon assignments being turned in at the designated time?

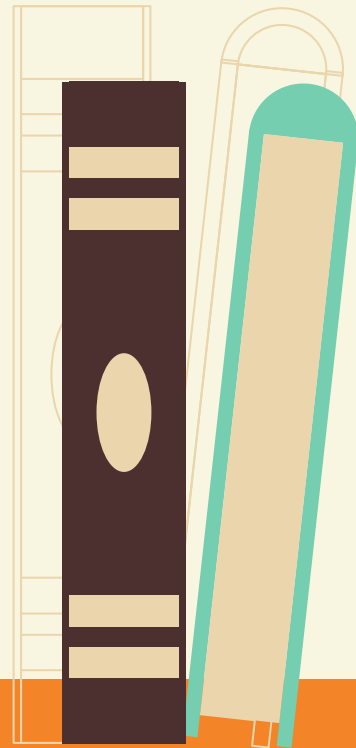
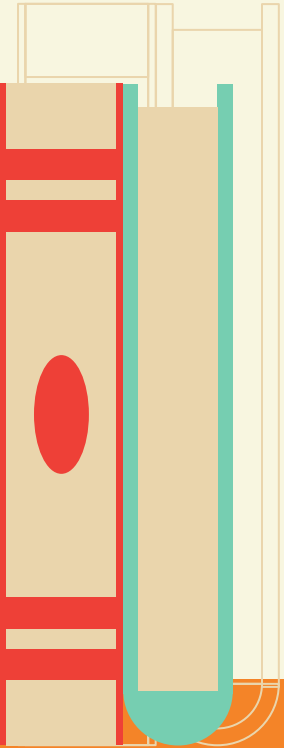


## Fundamental Alteration? Questions to Ask:

- To what degree does a student's failure to turn in an assignment by the deadline constitute a significant loss of the educational experience of other students in the class?
- Is there an alternative to provide the student additional time to complete assignments without exceeding the deadline?
- Have exceptions been made for extenuating circumstances to extend deadlines other than Disability?

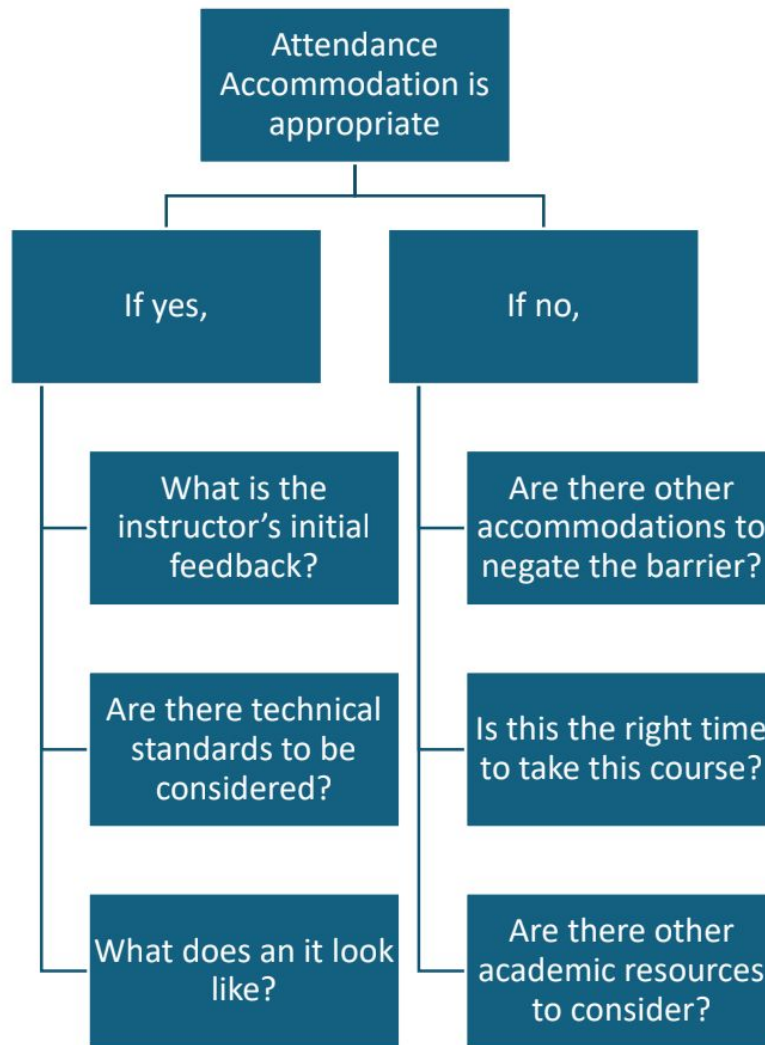


# Attendance Flexibility



# Attendance Flexibility

- Disabilities episodic in nature
- Interactive process is essential!!



# Considerations

- How is a student's physical presence in class necessary to meet objectives?
- What aspects are impacted by missing a day?
- At what point can we not fully assess what a student has learned?
  - It's not what a student missed, it's what they didn't gain

# Expectations

Students are expected to complete all assignments, quizzes, or exams in the time frame agreed upon with their faculty. DS can facilitate the faculty/student interaction when flexibility is requested. Faculty are responsible for notifying Disability Services immediately if there are any issues implementing this accommodation.

# Considerations

- Limits are reasonable; provide clear limits to the number of absences allowed and stay away from blanket “come-and-go and submit work as you please” policies.
- Make-up tests or missed work due to absences, when reasonable, will typically have short extension windows.





# Considerations

- The accommodation does not cover non-disability related illness (such as flu) or other non-disability related reasons as to why student is absent.
- Accommodations are not retroactive; instructors are not obligated to adjust previous penalties for absences if accommodation letter is provided later in the term.



# Considerations

- How much classroom interaction is there between the instructor and students, and among students?
- Do student contributions constitute a significant component of the learning process?
- Does the fundamental nature of the course rely upon student participation as an essential method for learning (e.g., foreign language)?



# When is Flexibility is a Fundamental Alteration?

- To what degree does a student's absence constitute a significant loss to the educational experience of other students in the class?
- How do you calculate attendance in the final grade?
- What is the classroom policy regarding attendance?



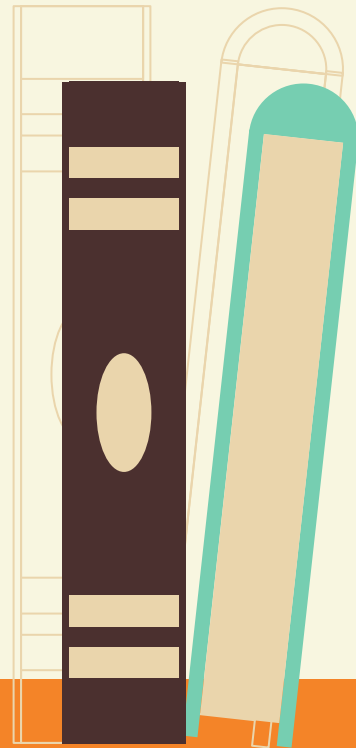
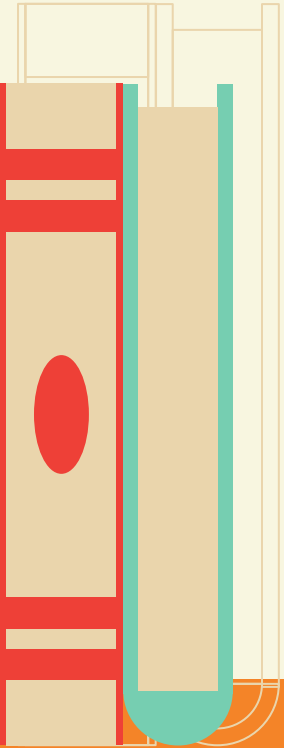
Course Analysis	In all class meetings	In most class meetings	In some class meetings	In a few class meetings
There is significant interaction between the instructor and students during the class meeting (e.g., discussion, interactive experiences, problem solving).				
There is significant classroom interaction among students during the class section (e.g., peer review, teamwork, group discussion).				
A fundamental learning objective relies on active student participation during the class meeting (e.g., lab experiments, paired language learning, performance work, clinical placement rotations).				
The student's absence or variable attendance will constitute a significant loss of the educational experience for the student and/or classmates (e.g., group or paired projects, performances) and/or cause a disturbance to course instruction.				

# Labs & Workshops Absences

## Considerations:

- Engage in Fundamental Alteration Process
- Allow to attend other sessions
- Add certain number of absences (+1) to existing syllabus

Questions?



# Q&A Topics:

- Absences
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What Else?  
Scenarios?

# ADHD Resources

**ADHD General Strategies and Tips:** [Succeeding in College with ADHD](#)

**Task Initiation:**

[Strategies for Task Initiation](#)

[Task Initiation Made Easy: 8 Ways to Start Tasks with ADHD](#)

**Manage Internal Distractions:** [Look into ADHD at Work: Time Wasters and Productivity Killers](#)

**Embrace your Work Schedule Style:**

- [The Best Work Schedule for ADHD Brains: Flexible or Rigid?](#)
- [The Most Productive Way to Schedule Your Day](#)
- [The Ideal Work Schedule, as Determined by Circadian Rhythms](#)

**To- Do Lists:**

- [11 ADHD to-do list free printable by Honestly ADHD](#)
- [To Do List Templates](#)



# Autism Resources

- [Instructing Students with Asperger Syndrome](#)